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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Lyndon DATE 10/6/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

AUG 01

SUBJ: ELECTION SEMINAR

REF: SAIGON S 2224

1. OPENING CEREMONY OF NATIONAL ELECTION SEMINAR HELD MORNING AUGUST 1 AT DIEN HONG CONFERENCE HALL. SEMINAR ATTENDED BY ALL PROVINCE CHIEFS, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE CHEIFS, VIS CHIEFS AND SECTOR S-5 OFFICERS. GENERAL NGUYEN DUC THANG, MINISTER FOR REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT, BEGAN PROCEEDINGS WITH SHORT SPEECH. HE EMPHASIZED SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTIONS, WHICH WILL SIGNAL "NEW ERA" IN VIET-NAM'S MARCH TOWARD

DEMOCRACY. MINISTER THANG SAID HE HAD BEEN DELEGATED ESPONSIBILITY OF COORDINATING ALL ELCTION PREPARATIONS, AND HAD THEREFORE ORGANIZED ELECTION SEMINAR. SEMINAR WILL LAST THREE DAYS. FIRST DAY WILL BE DEVOTED TO ORGANIZATION OF ELCTION, SECOND TO QUESTION OF SECURITY FOR ELECTION, AND THIRD TO VIS RESPONSIBILITY IN PUBLICIZING ELECTION.

2. PRIME MINISTER KY THEN SPOKE, STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF ELECTION FOR VIET-NAM, BOTH INTERNALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. KY CALLED FOR WIDE PARTICIPATION, AND INSTRUCTED PROVINCE ADMINISTRATIONS TO INSURE SECURITY FOR VOTERS. KY SAID THAT PROVINCES MUST MAKE ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTION. CADRE, INCLUDING RD CADRE, SHOULD HELP IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ABOUT ELECTION. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS AND STUDENTS FROM MILITARY ACADEMY WILL BE SENT TO PROVINCES IN DAYS PRECEDING ELECTION TO ASSIST IN MECHANICS OF ELECTORAL PROCESS.

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3. KY EMPHASIZED THAT ELECTION MUST BE HONEST, FOREIGN OBSERVERS (PRESS, RADIO-TV) WOULD BE IN PROVINCES ON ELECTION DAY. HE CAUTIONED, NONETHELESS, THAT COMMUNISTS AND THEIR PUPPETS NOT BE ALLOWED TO INFILTRATE ASSEMBLY. DECREE-LAWS GOVERNING ELECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF ASSEMBLY MUST BE APPLIED EXACTLY.

4. GENERAL THANG, GENERAL NGUYEN BAO TRI, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CHIEU HOI, AND GENERAL LINH QUANG VIEN,

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COMMISSIONER FOR SECURITY, PRESIDED OVER WORKING SESSION WHCIH FOLLOWED OPENING CEREMONY. AMONG ITEMS DISCUSSED WERE QUESTIONS OF LARGE MILITARY UNITS VOTING IN PROVINCES AWAY FROM THEIR BASE AREAS, AND WHETHER OR NOT PERSONS IN VILLAGES UNDERGOING PACIFICATION COULD VOTE. WITH REGARD TO FIRST QUESTION, DR. CHI OF QUANG NAM EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PROVINCES WOULD BE UNPREPARED TO HANDLE USDDEN INFLUX OF SOLDIER-VOTERS ON DAY OF ELCTION. GENERAL THANG DECIDED THAT CORPS COMMANDERS SHOULD INFORM JOINT GENERAL STAFF OF ANY LARGE OPERATIONS PLANNED ON OR AROUND ELECTION DAY, AND JGS WOULD INFORM PROVINCE CHIEFS BY SEPTEMBER 10. REGARDING ELIGIBILITY OF VOTERS IN AREAS UNDERGOING PACIFICATION (THOSE HAVING CADRE, BUT WHICH DO NOT YET HAVE LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES), GENERAL THANG SAID THAT THEY DEFINITELY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO VOTE. THANG SAID, HOWEVER, THAT PEOPLE IN SUCH AREAS HAVE NOT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY INFORMED ABOUT ELECTION. RD CADRE MUST DO BETTER JOB OF PUBLICIZING IT.

5. DURING LUCHEON IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MORNING SESSION, TOLD THAT PRIME MINISTER KY AND OTHER MINISTERS HAD BORNE DOWN VERY HARD INDEED ON NECESSITY FOR HONEST ELECTIONS ACCORDING

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TO LETTER OF ELECTORAL LAW. THERE HAD BEEN SPECIFIC INJUNCTION AGAINST MOVING OF MILITARY UNITS FROM ONE AREA TO ANOTHER IN ORDER TO INFLUENCE ELECTIONS, AS HAS BEEN DONE OCCASIONALLY DURING PAST VIETNAMESE ELECTIONS. SAID THAT INASMUCH AS THERE WERE MORE REGISTERED VOTERS AND MORE SEATS IN SAIGON THAN ANY OTHER CITY OF PROVINCE, MOST OF HIS TIME BETWEEN NOW AND SEPTEMBER 11 WOULD BE DEVOTED TO ELECTIONS.
LODGE
NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA 8-1-66 10:40 a.m.

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